

REMARKS

Claims 45, 48-49, 77, 79-81 and 88-99 are currently pending. Claims 90, 92-95 and 97 are rejected. Applicants thank the examiner for noting that Claims 45, 48-49, 77, 79-81 and 88-89 are allowed and further noting that Claims 91, 96 and 98-99 contain allowable subject matter.

I. Claims 91, 96 and 98-99

The Examiner objects to Claims 91, 96 and 98-99 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 91, 96 and 98-99 all depend from the base Claim 90. Therefore, Claim 90 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 91. Claims 96, 98 and 99 depending from Claim 90 have been amended to remove redundant limitations. Therefore, Claims 91, 96 and 98-99 are now in allowable form.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejects claims 90 and 92-95 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Halm, U.S. 5,651,158.

In response, Claim 90 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 91, which the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Therefore, Claim 90 and claims 92-95 depending therefrom are allowable.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Examiner rejects Claim 97 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Halm in view of Hafliger et al., U.S. 6,802,097.

In view of the amendment made to the base claim 90, which is allowable, claim 97 is also allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, early notice of which is earnestly solicited.

Should any outstanding questions or issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' attorney at the telephone number below.

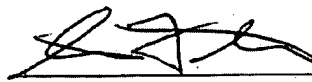
No fee is believed to be due for the filing of this Amendment and Response. However, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees due, or credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 03-2455.

Respectfully submitted,

Jimenez *et al.*

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By:



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